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INFO RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0165  
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0190  
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 1006  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1766  
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0328  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0137  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1074  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 001069

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TAGS: [KAWC](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [RW](#)  
SUBJECT: RWANDA PRISON BEAT: PRISON POPULATION DOWN, ICTR  
FACILITIES NEARLY FINISHED, KAREGEYA OUT

REF: KIGALI 342

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

#### Summary

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¶1. (C) Rwanda's prison population fell to 64,000 inmates, as the government continued its releases of persons convicted by gacaca courts, relieving the severe overcrowding that previously characterized the prison system. A well-constructed Kigali transit facility, built to receive International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) prisoners transferred for trial in Rwanda, nears completion. Patrick Karageya, formerly a regime insider and head of the external intelligence service, was released from prison and returned to his family. Rwanda now has a single "political" prisoner still in custody. End summary.

#### Prison Population Continues to Fall

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¶2. (C) Pol/econ chief spoke with International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) Head of Delegation Tobias Epprecht on November 16, regarding Rwanda's prison population. Epprecht said that the total population of the nation's 15 central prisons was falling as the government continued releasing gacaca prisoners, sending home those who have previously confessed (the majority of gacaca prisoners have confessed) to their 1994 genocide crimes. As of October 31, 64,000 persons remained in prison, including 46,000 persons either convicted or awaiting trial on genocide charges, and 18,000 "ordinary" prisoners. As indicated in earlier conversations, Epprecht confirmed that the government officially closed in September the Gisovu Prison near Kibuye. While several hundred prisoners still remained there, no new prisoner intakes were occurring, and all prisoners at Gisovu will be released over the course of the next few months. Epprecht described Gisovu as one of the more dilapidated prisons, and added that its closure as Rwanda's overall prison population declined was no great surprise. At the same time, he did express some irritation with the prison service for encouraging ICTR to continue with ongoing refurbishment of Gisovu up to the day the closure was announced. Mid-year Rwanda's prison population stood at 98,000, he noted, so the population had fallen by just over a third in five months. He expected prisoner releases to continue through the end of the year and into 2008.

## Transit Center for ICTR Prisoners Nears Completion

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¶3. (SBU) Emboffs visited the Central "1930" Prison in downtown Kigali November 9 for a tour of the transit center, now under construction to receive prisoners to be transferred from the ICTR. ICTR prisoners will be permanently housed in Mpanga, 90 minutes south of Kigali, in a new prison constructed with Dutch assistance. A separate wing for ICTR detainees has been situated there (a contract to finish the interior of this wing will be signed soon, according to colleagues at the Dutch Embassy). Prisoners will be brought to Kigali when their cases are called for various proceedings, housed in the transit center there, and then returned to Mpanga. Criminal cases in Rwanda typically are tried intermittently, with proceedings spread out over a number of months, rather than continuous hearings over several days or weeks.

¶4. (SBU) Most of the transit facility, located just beyond the main walls of the 1930 prison, has been completed. There are eight individual cells: five are 10 feet by 8 feet, three are 12 feet by 9 feet, each with a bunk, desk and chair, with white-washed brick walls and tiled floors. There are two corridors of toilets and showers, and a large (approximately 40 feet by 45 feet) exercise yard. The structure has a good deal of natural light, wide hallways, and provision for the capture of rainwater in a tank (still to be installed). A small library/television lounge is the last structure to be finished, and will be located in the exercise yard. The structure appeared clean, spacious and well-constructed.

¶5. (SBU) Emboffs also spoke briefly with former Minister Charles Ntakirutinka, who is housed in the VIP wing just

inside the main walls of the prison (which has separate cells and its own small exercise yard). Formerly he shared this facility with former President Pasteur Bizimungu, who was released by the government in April (reftel). (Note: Both were convicted in 2004 on charges of inciting civil disobedience and forming a criminal enterprise, linked to allegations of fanning ethnic tensions in their attempt to establish a new political party. End note). Ntakirutinka appeared to be in good health, and he joked with the prison director who gave emboffs their tour.

## Patrick Karegeya Released After Serving 18 Month Sentence

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¶6. (C) Patrick Karegeya, formerly Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) spokesman, and earlier the Director of External Intelligence at the National Security Service. completed his 18 month sentence at the Kanombe military detention facility and was released on November 15. Karegeya, at one time very close to President Kagame, had been convicted of insubordination and desertion for disobeying a direct order from Chief of Defense Staff General James Kabarebe to report for duty. Embassy staff spoke with his attorney, who had witnessed his release from Kanombe. The attorney noted that several senior military officers met with Karegeya immediately prior to his release. Karegeya then proceeded to his home in Kigali to be reunited with his wife and children. Another contact spoke with Karegeya at home the day following his release. According to the contact, one week before his release Karegeya was taken out of his cell to a meeting with security chief Emmanuel Ndahiro and one other official and briefed on how he was expected to conduct himself after release (Karegeya did not disclose exactly how he was expected to behave, said the contact).

Comment

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¶7. (C) The continuing prison releases have begun to relieve the severe overcrowding that characterized the 16 (now 15) central prisons. Although estimates vary, standard prison system capacity in Rwanda is estimated to be just over 40,000 persons, so Rwanda has some way to go before it reaches a

more normal-sized prison population. The new transit center in Kigali has been seen and blessed by ICTR Prosecutor Hassan Bubacar Jallow, and it appears to us to be quite adequate for the temporary housing of prominent genocide suspects who may one day stay there. Patrick Karegeya, who -- aside from his conviction -- had a serious falling out with senior members of the Rwandan military and government, will likely live the same sort of quiet existence as former president Bizimungu. Bizimungu has kept a very low profile since his April release. This leaves former Minister Ntakirutinka as the sole remaining "political" prisoner in Rwanda. End Comment.

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